



Marist Brothers - Irmãos Maristas

Province of Southern Africa - Província da África Austral

NEWSLETTER

2016 September/Setembro V.2 #1

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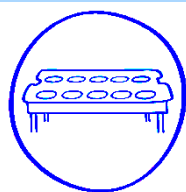
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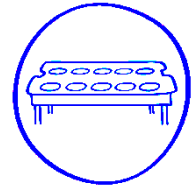
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La Valla

Marist Province of Southern Africa

7th Provincial Chapter - 2016



Towards a new Beginning...

**Message from the 7th Provincial Chapter of the Province of Southern Africa
held in Mtendere, Malawi from 23 August to 26 August 2016**

Dear Brothers, lay Marists, colleagues and friends ...

INTRODUCTION – A WORD OF APPRECIATION

In the first place the Chapter extends its sincere thanks to the Brothers of all age groups for their commitment and ardent zeal in carrying out the Marist Mission in the Province. Sincere thanks also go to our Lay collaborators on various levels for their work in furthering Marcellin's dream.

1. MISSION (THE MONTAGNE EXPERIENCE)

The encounter with the young Montagne was an event that profoundly marked Fr. Champagnat's life, and clearly brought about the birth of the Marist Institute. This is a reminder of the importance and urgency of our mission, as relevant today as it was in Fr. Champagnat's time. Inspired by our Founder, we feel the same call to get going and respond to the new Montagnes of today, wherever they may be.

Reflection on Mission:

The Chapter had a reflection on Fr. Champagnat's encounter with the young Montagne. In the light of the Montagne experience the Chapter reflected on the mission of the Province and its Montagnes today. In the same way, the Chapter invites you to reflect on the following questions:

- What is my mission as a Marist today?
- Who are my Montagnes?

2. THE FOURVIÈRE PROMISES

On July 23, 1816, the day after their ordination, a group of young priests, full of enthusiasm, travelled to the shrine of Fourvière in Lyon. At the feet of our Lady, they promised to establish the Society of Mary. The origins of the Society of Mary remind us that, as religious and laity, we come together for mission, and are called to be the Marian face of the Church through our particular way of being and building the Church.



Reflection on Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats in relation to Mission:

In the light of the Fourvière Promises, the Chapter reflected on the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats of the Province in relation to Mission. In the same way the Chapter invites you too to a personal reflection on the following:

- What are my strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in relation to my mission?
- What have I fallen in love with in my mission?

3. THE DREAM

France had been at war almost continuously for 26 years and public education in rural areas had collapsed. This background of no schools or education system led Marcellin into a life-changing event. Marcellin's dream, manifested itself more vividly at La Valla after Marcellin's encounter with Jean-Baptiste Montagne. What affected Marcellin so profoundly about this meeting was that Jean-Baptiste had never learned the most basic elements of the Christian Faith. To Marcellin, the death of Jean-Baptiste at only 17 and in almost complete ignorance of the Christian faith was a tragedy. This event, more than any other, set Marcellin on the path which would lead him to found the Brothers.

Reflection on the Dream:

Within the light of Marcellin's dream, the Chapter reflected on the Dream of the Province, its Realities and Ideals. From this perspective the Chapter invites you too to reflect on the following:

- What is my dream as a Marist today?
- What are my realities?
- What are my ideals?

4. POSITION OF THE PROVINCE

The Chapter reflected and deliberated on both the statistics and financial standing of the Province. We saw the need for reflective action to retain good vocations. In response to our financial dependency, we affirmed the urgency of becoming self-sustaining, and used four areas to analyse our works in preparation for the way forward. These were:



- works that are good for the Mission but have no or little financial income
- works that are good for the Mission and also bring in income
- works that are neither good for Mission nor income
- works that are not in line with the Mission but bring in income.

5. LA VALLA

In January 1817 Marcellin bought a simple house in La Valla and recruited two young men, Jean-Marie Granjon and Jean-Baptiste Audras. This house became the cradle of our Marist beginning. As we move towards a new beginning, we are called upon to revisit our humble beginning at La Valla.

Way forward:

The Provincial Chapter reflected on the way forward by using the guiding questions below. Our Chapter responses to these questions constitute the calls we wish to put to the Province:

A. What must we as a Province **ELIMINATE** in our mission? We named such things as:

- the receiving syndrome
- absence from community activities
- regionalism
- individualism
- consumerism
- lack of accountability and transparency
- indifference
- inappropriate behaviours
- know-it-all mentality.



B. What must we as a Province **REDUCE** in our mission? We suggested:

- “workaholism”
- unnecessary spending
- financial dependence
- the number of Brothers leaving the Institute, and Brothers leaving without prior discernment.

C. What must we as a Province **RAISE** in our mission? We identified:

- prayer life
- community life
- transparency and accountability
- time for manual work
- openness to Lay Marists
- child protection and advocacy
- maintenance of Institutions
- contact with the youth
- support for recruiters.

D. What must we as a Province **CREATE** in our mission? We named:

- youth Apostolate in our schools
- full-time vocation promoters
- income generating projects
- strategic plan for the Province
- new schools
- Marist movements in our schools
- Marist Schools Councils in our countries
- functional finance committees
- Marist Lay Commissions



E. What must we **DO DIFFERENTLY?** We proposed:

- our model of governance
- apostolates not necessarily linked to institutions
- management of farms and other income generating activities
- involvement of lay Marists.

We know that commitment to spiritual growth was a fundamental element for Father Champagnat: his deep spirit of faith opened him quite naturally to the Presence of God, whether in the forests of the Hermitage or in the noisy streets of Paris. To live like him involves cultivating silence, dedicating enough time to personal and community prayer, and listening to the Word of God, like Mary at the Annunciation. Like her, who kept and meditated everything in her heart, we strive to become contemplatives in action.

We would like to highlight two formal resolutions that we took as a Provincial Chapter, calling for your co-operation in translating them into action:

RESOLUTION 1:

The Chapter strongly recommends that there be fully functional boards – or the equivalent – in each of our schools, which would open the way to the formation of a Marist Schools Council in each country.

RESOLUTION 2:

The founders of the Society of Mary were ahead of their time in seeing laity as part of the Marist family. The role of the laity was repeatedly mentioned in this Chapter, and we recommend that we both expand our efforts to share our mission as brothers with laity and appreciate the vocation of lay Marists.

Br Norbert Mwila (Provincial Superior), **Br Joe Walton** (former Provincial Superior)

and 22 elected Delegates:

**Banda Nicholas; Banda Reuben; Bushilya Patrick; Bwalya Patrick; Bwanali John;
Chakasara Fortune; Chidothi Richard; Jumbe Francis; Kalumbula Tomás; Maceia Felizardo; Matemba Ignatius;
Medida Geraldo; Muteveri Ebel; Mutingwende Jacob; Mwambucha Frank; Mwape Kasongo; Nangolo Euclides;
Pieterse Jude; Sikelo Andrew; Silepo Floriano;
Zimmermann Christopher; Zulu Peter.**

**We fly to your patronage, holy mother of God.
Despise not our prayers in our necessities,
but deliver us from every evil,
O glorious and blessed Virgin.**

(3rd century Contic prayer)



REPORT ON “DARE TO DREAM”

Lyon 17 – 23 July 2016

International Marist Youth Gathering

The Superiors of the four branches of the Marist Family (i.e. the Marist Sisters, the Marist Missionary Sisters of the Society of Mary, the Marist Fathers and the Marist Brothers) decided to have an International Youth Gathering as a family from the 17th to the 23rd of July 2016.

There were several reasons for the gathering in Lyon, France which included the promoting of the ongoing development and integration of young people from the apostolate of the four branches of the Marist Family, the celebration of the bicentenary of the Promise of Fourvière, and preparation for the World Youth Day in Krakow. The Marist Brothers of the Province of Southern Africa had two young people; **Jason Grieve** and **Patrice Maurai** in the company of **Br Tererai Gijima**. We had an experience of a lifetime. This report serves as a sharing of our experience as well as a witness of our dreams as the Marists of today.



1. A Marist Family Thing

We arrived in Lyon on the 17th of July 2016 and met the representatives from other countries and provinces of the Marist World. It was a great and humbling moment to witness the gathering of over 450 young people from all over and the Brothers, Fathers and Sisters who work with the youth in various places. In the shadows of the towering Fourvière Shrine which is the peak of the hill of Fourvière, we were hosted at the Marist Fathers School.

The morrow day we introduced ourselves to the gathering according to the provinces we represented. It was a long session as there were various groups across the world but an eye-opening experience on how the Marist Family has spread the dream of the founders to the ends of the world. All the continents stood represented in diversified forms of apostolate in serving especially the less privileged and the young.

To facilitate sharing and interaction, we were grouped in smaller communities. We were separated randomly and I appreciated the knowledge of another language as my Portuguese came in handy in the mixed group without professional translators. Deeper personal introductions and sharing took place and enriching as it was, it formed a strong team spirit and an air of friendship. We bonded with people from all over.

The Mass was expertly animated. It was a colourful celebration centred on the experience of Emmaus. In the breaking of bread was the experience that rekindled the hope of the disciples, so expected was the sharing of the experience of Fourvière to awaken the promise 200 years old, yet so new.

2. A Visit to our Roots

On Tuesday the 19th we were divided in the groups according to the Founders. Those of the Marist Brothers we were to visit La Valla and L'hermitage.

Starting with the House of Montagne, we retraced the source of the Marist Brothers' story. The experience was breath-taking.

Of the house of Jean Baptiste Montagne no more than a few rocks remain, and an inscription which marks the place that holds so much in the heart of every Marist, Brother, Laity and young person. The experience on that mountainside in the house of a poor lumberer, was the trigger that fired Champagnat to begin his project to found the Brothers.

We went to La Valla and there we saw for ourselves the work of Marcellin at its roots. The area is a mountainous region. As it was summer the sight was magnificent but the imagination of how a winter would look like and let alone a young priest crossing those crevices in his pastoral calls. Most touching of it all in the La Valla house was the famous table. We were given brief history of the way of life of the first Brothers and their apostolate.

L'Hermitage was our last stop. By the waters of Gier we held our breath to hear how Marcellin and the first generation of Brothers worked in the wet valley to construct the monumental house. The famous rock face which forms the foundation of the house still stands adamant, and tells the tale of how determined and full of dreams the first Marists were under the leadership of Marcellin. We visited the room of the founder and paid respects to the remains of Champagnat and Br Francois as well as the first Brothers at rest in the cemetery. On



their shoulders we stand and face the challenge of the day in making Jesus known and loved to the young people today.

We returned to L'Hermitage another day with the rest of the participants and filled the hall of the house. For a day the house was alive with the young people with dreams of dare probably just as it was once a time with the young bothers of Champagnat.

3. Witness of the Pilgrims on the Marist Journey

We had a round table testimony of the Marists (Brothers, Fathers, Lay and Young People) in apostolate. It was inspiring to hear the testimonies of the other people in the mission. Their witness especially the branch of the Laity showed a unique development in the outreach of the Marist Family. As we expand our tent, it's good to recognize that our tent, so to speak, has

much outside which needs to be appreciated and brought in. The Marist Sisters have an impressive lay organization in their apostolate.

We also had an address by the four Superior Generals of the Branches. The message they sent was clearly around the rekindling of the dream of the four Founders. The mission still is as fresh as it was 200 years ago. The dream of a Marian Church is a dream of the true face of the Church as it gathered at Pentecost.



4. Witness of the Pilgrims on the Marist Journey

On the 21st we were invited to the City Square by the Mayor of Lyon. Across the Rhone River we walked to the Square in response to this special invitation. It was amazing to listen to the Mayor and his cherished memories of the legacy of the Marists to the city of Lyon and beyond. We were treated to a French snack and left for the long climb up to Fourvière.

The program also had the Marist workshops in which we were coached in courses varying from **Human Rights, Art, Animation, Short Film making, Music, Choreography, Volunteerism** to **Sexuality** etc. The exercise was aiming at empowering the participants in their youth groups to improve their lives and kindle creativity in their apostolic groups where they come from.

5. Celebration of the Fourvière Pledge

The peak of the youth gathering was the celebration of the Bicentenary of the Fourvière Pledge. Like the first founders of the Society of Mary 200 years before, on the 23rd of July we climbed the famous staircase to the Fourvière Shrine.

Together with the people of Lyon and the Friends of the Marists we filled the Shrine for the Eucharistic celebration in which we all took part in renewing the pledge. The celebration was themed: **200 years, it's still a promise....** The Mass was led by Father John Hannan (Superior General of the Marist Fathers). Like the First Marist Missionaries, we felt challenged and empowered yet again to go forth and make Jesus known and loved to the ends of the world.

We ended our meeting with a special lunch with those who came to celebrate with us. The afternoon was free to see the city of Lyon and bid farewell to the many friends we had made over the week.



Thank you

As the participants of this program we, Patrice, Jason and Tererai, wish to extend our gratitude to the Marist Brothers Province for the opportunity to participate in this unique event. The experience was inspiring and empowering and as we come back we are rejuvenated in our ministry and apostolate. As a **recommendation** we would wish to see a **vibrant Marist Youth Ministry** with a special **Provincial Youth Gathering** for the Province in celebration of the Bicentenary of the Marist Brothers.

Prepared by **Br Tererai Gijima** August 2016





Saint Teresa of Kolkata
Canonised 4 September 2016

BIRTHDAYS THIS MONTH

01-09-1939	Jude Pieterse
02-09-1940	Mario Colussi
04-09-1992	Dominic Zgambo (Nov.ad.2016)
05-09-1961	Lawrence Ndawala
08-09-1975	Nicholas Zvenyika
10-09-1966	Óscar Martín Vicario 50
13-09-1992	Henry Ngeli (Nov.ad.2016)
18-09-1993	Aubrey Chimangeni (Nov.ad.2015)
23-09-1973	Andrew Sikelo
25-09-1942	António da Silva
28-09-1989	Misheck Mkanthama



IRMÃO FERMINO JOSÉ SCHNEIDER **Nascimento 11-09-1918 Falecimento 6-08-2016**

O Irmão Fermينو, natural do Brasil, foi nomeado de 1952 a 1963 a Beira, **MOÇAMBIQUE** e também de 1964 a 2000 no **ANGOLA** nos varios lugares: Silva Porto ou Kuito-Bié; Benguela, Lobito, e Luanda. Demos graças ao Senhor por seu ministério na África, um total de cerca de 48 anos.

Oremos para o descanso de sua alma, e para aqueles que estão de luto a sua morte.



THRESHOLD PROGRAMME – MANZIANA



Photo taken after the Opening Liturgy ...
Spot the two Brothers from our Province and others you know

PRAYER INTENTIONS



- For our Provincial Superior, **Norbert Mwila**, as he begins a first term in the ministry of leadership, management and animation of the Province.
- And also for our six Provincial Councillors who will assist him: **Frank Mwambucha, Patrick Bushilya, Ebel Muteveri, Jude Pieterse, Geraldo Medida & Euclides Nangolo**
- For our **INSTITUTE** as we prepare for our **General Chapter**.
- For peace, especially in **SYRIA** and **SOUTH SUDAN**



Frank Ebel Geraldo Norbert Euclides Jude Patrick



VOCATION WORKSHOP ZIMBABWE

The Sector of Zimbabwe had a workshop organized by the Vocations Promoter for the young men aspiring to be Marist Brothers. Twelve aspirants turned up for the Workshop from the 11th to the 16th of August 2016. Brothers from all the four communities came in with various assigned input. It was a wonderful exercise to have a glimpse of the future of the institute in the passionate young men who enjoyed every session of the Workshop.



A MARIST BROTHER WITH ITCHY FEET

A note from the Administrator of the Hermitage

Here is an article that appeared in a recent issue of the National Catholic Reporter, a popular American magazine.

Br. Sean Sammon suggested to a friend writer that he had a good story to tell and this article is the result of his suggestion.

Hope you enjoy it.

Ciao

Dostie



The brother with 'itchy feet'

Marist's adventurous spirit has led him to long career in education in Malawi

BY ELIZABETH EISENSTADT EVANS



Marist Brother
Fernand Dostie

While there are classic novels about men of God who go abroad and find themselves adrift, Fernand Dostie went to Africa as a Marist brother

and found himself — as an educator, administrator and mentor to generations of students.

Dostie's story is very much his own, though it was shaped in part by larger forces. Over the decades, his Marist "band of brothers" has handed over more and more of their work to indigenous religious and local laypeople.

On the political front, his career has been affected by the often-challenging demands of work in a country, Malawi, where illness and poverty were rife and authoritarian rule once the norm. (Malawi has been a democracy since the 1990s.)

Dostie was born in the Adstock region of Quebec, Canada, the youngest of a Catholic family of thirteen.

"I soon learned to share and accept others as a fact of life," he said, adding that he first encountered the Marist Brothers as a boarding student at Beauceville Juniorate, a school about 30 miles from his home.

"As a boarder in a Marist school during my secondary education, I fell in love with the Marist Brothers' way of life, of dedication to the youth, especially the ones in need," he said.

Dostie was raised 50 miles north of the American border, and didn't speak English until he attended Marist College.

"I'm a little bit of a chameleon," said Dostie, admitting he is an adventurous spirit with "itchy feet" and a yen for travel from a young age.

"My whole training was always involved with a large section of the world's population. To me, that was providential," he said. "When I came to Africa, I felt very much at ease, and loved the situation from day one."

After the years of training and study necessary to embrace the vocation of a Marist Brother, Dostie returned to Canada, where he spent four years teaching English at the military camp of Valcartier, followed by a brief stint at Lévis Juniorate, a Marist secondary school.

English was not a popular language among the French during the 1960s, so when his provincial supervisor asked if he was interested in a move to Africa, "my answer was: When do I leave?", Dostie recalled.

At 29, he arrived in Malawi just as it was beginning to evolve from being a British colonial outpost to full-fledged nationhood. In 1962, he began teaching, a few short days after his arrival, at the Zomba Catholic Secondary School, which was founded to teach African boys in the area now known as Malawi, Zimbabwe and Zambia.

Dostie became known not only as a dedicated teacher, but as an able



administrator. A few years after he arrived, he was appointed headmaster of a boy's boarding school in the newly independent country. Given the diversity of students, many of whom lacked confidence in their academic abilities, Dostie also encouraged them to compete on the athletic field.

"Eventually," he said, "the school developed excellent sports teams and beat other Marist schools in national exams as well. I am proud to say that I am still in touch with pupils of that period. They were wonderful years."

Dostie was elected as administrator of the local Marist community in the late 1960s, serving for six years before filling in for a headmaster going on sabbatical at the school where he first taught. When that man did not return, Dostie assumed his post — and remained there for 20 years.

"It gave me great satisfaction to see some of these youngsters grow into mature students ready to play an important role in the university, and then to see them taking important places in government and the private sector," said Dostie.

Thomson Mpinganjira, CEO of a high-level financial services firm, was a pupil at Zomba Catholic Secondary School when Dostie

returned there to become headmaster. He recalls the passion with which the Marist strove to keep the younger boys from being bullied, creating a system of senior "defenders" to protect them.

Dostie was a strict disciplinarian, recalls Mpinganjira, but preferred "soft sanctions" and counseling to physical punishment. Those who disobeyed house rules would eventually be caught, with the aid of student leaders, and perhaps suffer a most undesirable fate: being barred from the Saturday trip into town and the opportunity to meet up with girls.

"In my four years at the school, I only witnessed two student expulsions from the school for gross indiscipline, and in an environment of a boys-only school this was extremely remarkable and goes to reflect the passion and compassion of Br. Dostie for his students," said Mpinganjira.

The banker credits his then-headmaster with helping to instill in him the courage to stand up and do the right thing in the face of ridicule from other students.

"I think this was the genesis of that behavior in me that has contributed to my success to this day," he said, noting that other "old boys" include the governor of Malawi's Reserve Bank, as well as cabinet ministers and business leaders.

Though he is circumspect about the pre-democracy years in Malawi, Dostie said it was painful to watch university professors and some of his graduates end up in prison, some without even a sham trial. But with the help of an Irish priest who had contacts within the prison system, he was able to provide inmates with necessities like powdered milk and anti-malaria medications.

"At no time whatsoever did I feel threatened," said Dostie, who exudes the tact of a consummate diplomat. "I always reminded the boys that there are times when it's advisable to speak and times when [it's advisable] to delay and speak later. I've never believed in martyrdom."

In 1994, after 20 years at the helm of Zomba School, Dostie was sent to Rome to work in the Marist headquarters. It was there that he got to know Br. Sean Sammon, then the order's vicar general and now scholar-in-residence at Marist College in Poughkeepsie, N.Y.

"He is a great administrator and managed to put some order in the office. He also has a very welcoming personality which made it easy for many people to relate to him. Hospitality numbers among his many virtues," Sammon wrote in an email. "While in Rome, he was also something of a 'rabbi' to our young brothers from the African continent who were involved in getting graduate degrees at one or another of the Roman universities. He was a confidante, an 'older brother,' a mentor to many of them."

When Dostie's work in Rome ended, he was sent to Zimbabwe for seven years as secretary of the province of Southern Africa. Upon returning "quite happily" to Malawi in 2009, he decided that, with Malawian Marists running the schools, it was time to move forward on a new project.





Maula Prison in Lilongwe, where Marist Br. Fernand Dostie leads an educational program for inmates—Photos courtesy of Br. Fernand Dostie

Situated in the capital city of Lilongwe, the barbed-wire-surrounded Maula Prison, with its approximately 2,500 inmates, has been the setting since the early years of the century for a program in which inmates held classes for other inmates.

"Over the years, it has been shown that those who went through the school very seldom return as inmates," said Dostie.

Under Dostie's leadership, the program added a center where prisoners could learn skills like carpentry, tailoring or tinsmithing. Prisoners who earn a certificate upon graduating from the program will have a better chance at a job when they emerge from confinement. Financial independence will also make former inmates more acceptable to families who might be prone to shun them, Dostie adds.

While there is some degree of government support through the group responsible for technical education, Dostie has cannily tapped his network of "old boys" — Canadian

relations and friends, and the Marists themselves, to keep the program going.

To support himself, he teamed up with an indigenous Marist brother to open a bed and breakfast, which now caters to members of global nongovernmental agencies visiting Malawi.

While there were once 40 Marist brothers from Canada living and working in his region of southeastern Africa, said Dostie, "at the moment, I'm the only one left."

Asked if he ever plans to return to Canada, Dostie said that he hopes to live out his days in his adopted country — unless he becomes a burden to others. So far, that shows no signs of happening.

[Elizabeth Eisenstadt Evans is a religion columnist for Lancaster Newspapers Inc., as well as a freelance writer.]